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here articles of purchase and sale are calculated in silver currency.

The daily work of the women is cooking, carrying water, cleaning the house and yard, etc. During the time of farmwork they help the men in cultivating the fields.

FOOD

The staple food is dura. It is cooked, baked into a bread *(kwon)*, roasted, brewed and, when green, eaten raw. For different kinds of food vide page 102. Their diet is rather monotonous, dura being its constant chief component. The dura is pounded and ground. The mortar is either a log of wood hollowed out, or a flat excavation in the ground, limed out with clay. The mill-stones — a large and a small one, with the latter the grinding is done — are secured from districts west of the Shilluk country. — Fire is made by twirling a hard stick on a soft piece of wood.

Besides dura they eat sesame, duchn, maize, beans, some onions, various grass seeds, the seeds of the lotus plant and of some kinds of nymphaeae. The fruit of several trees, as deleib, nabag, etc. also serve as food; they even rob ant hills to procure the winter store of hoarded seeds. White ants, when in the winged state, are a delicacy to them. — Milk is used in the household in many ways: it is drunk fresh, sour, or boiled, or dura meals are prepared with it. They also make butter, by shaking or rolling the milk in a gourd. — As domestic animals are almost never slain, meat forms no part of the daily food, but is rather an exceptional delicacy, which is, however, sought for with eagerness; of game they hardly leave any piece uneaten, skin and bowels not excepted; they do not even despise dead animals. The blood of killed animals is kept and cooked, but they do not tap the blood from living cattle, as is the custom with the Bari and Masai. — Generally they prefer the meat of castrated animals.

Two chief meals are taken daily; one from nine to ten in the morning, and the second at sunset.

BREWING OF BEER

A large quantity of the dura the people reap is used in cooking merisa or beer. The grain is put into jars and water poured on it. Thus it is left till the grain begins to sprout. Then it is spread in the sun to dry, and then pounded or ground; this wet meal is mixed with flour from the fresh grain and put a second time into jars which are filled with water. After stirring and mixing well, a little dry meal is sprinkled on it; the jars are covered with small mats and allowed to remain a day or two, until it begins to ferment, when a little more water and meal are added. When the whole mass is well fermented it is filtered through a grass funnel, and the following day is ready for use. It will keep about a week. Though this drink is slightly intoxicating, it does not seem to do great harm; it is very nourishing, and the natives regard it rather as a food than a beverage.

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wooden handle. The hoer sits on the ground or squats on one knee or both, as he chooses, and catching the grass with one hand cuts it off just under the surface with the hoe. Shaking the dirt from the roots of the weeds he throws them into piles, leaving the ground clean and smooth. It is a good surface cultivation, suitable for this soil and climate, and when the season is favorable, the yield for the amount of ground tilled is very good. 241

The Indian corn grown by the Shullas is a small early variety, which is in roasting ear a fortnight before the early dura is ready for parching. But before any grain is harvested a sort of first fruits' sacrifice is made, an old man and woman go to the various fields of the village and bring in some of the ripening ears of corn and heads of dura, and place them by the sacred house of the village. Some is later taken and ground and mixed with water and plastered on the side of the sacred tukl, the rest is taken by the people and some put on the door of their own houses, and some is carefully tied up within. 243

When the dura is ready for harvesting, the heads are cut off short with a clam shell and heaped upon a rack made of poles resting upon forked posts about two feet above the ground. After drying a month it is flailed out with heavy clubs by the men and winnowed by the women and carried to the village, where it is stored in large barrel shaped bins made of coarse grass. The bottom of the large basket granary is oval, a grass band wrapped with rope is formed about the small base and resting in the forks of short stakes driven in the ground bears the weight of the filled basket and keeps it off the ground and free from ants. [237] [251]

There are very many varieties of dura. One man gave me the names of thirty-two varieties. It is probable however that the same variety has different names in different localities.

Dura is eaten in a variety of ways. The earliest heads are simply thrown on the fire and roasted. It is often merely boiled till softened and eaten so. A great deal is made into a mild beer and used as a regular food diet. The popular way of cooking it is to grind it into a fine meal and cook it into a mush and eat it with milk, or cook it up with meat. It is sometimes boiled with beans, and sesame is often eaten with it. A sort of dura bread is also made. 252

The Shulla retains all of his pastoral instincts and prizes his flocks and herds above all else. His sheep are very inferior in size and have no wool where wool ought to grow. His goats are small and few are good milk producers. His cows are also generally poor in milking qualities, but are fair in size and in beef conformation. They belong to the Indian breed of cattle, which have the hump on the wethers. 233

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Houses are swept out soon after dawn by older women and small girls, and they are responsible for the collection of firewood for cooking purposes.

Very soon after the return of the water-carrying party the sound of dura pounding is heard on all sides, and this work and the preparation of native beer for the household goes on intermittently all day; the meal times for men being about 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., while the women snatch meals at odd hours.

At the time of writing every spare moment of the day is spent by the women in sowing the dura and maize crop around the village, the work proceeding steadily from dawn to dusk.

Even after dark the women have to finish the preparation and serve the evening meal to their men, and, as this is the main meal of the day, woe betide the wife who has not prepared it in time or to the satisfaction of her lord!

At about 5.30 p.m. the small boys return with the goats and sheep, and these—after having been re-united with their offspring—are turned into the *luaks* for the night.

Then smoke fires are lighted in readiness for the cattle which are herded in at dusk, tied up with head ropes, and milked; these duties keep nearly all the men busy until after 7 p.m., soon after which the cultivators return from their labours.

Rather than call the Shilluk a lazy race, let us say that they understand the art of taking their ease restfully!

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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more practical purpose of tethering the cattle as towards sunset they come winding back from the pasture. In the hot months, if there is no danger from lions, they are left all night in the open and the byre is used as a dormitory by the boys and unmarried men of the village. It is the custom, too, for the unmarried girls to sleep together in vacant huts in the village, for the sleeping hut of a household is reserved for the householder and his wife and small children.

The rear part of the store hut is taken up by an enormous circular grain basket, four feet high and the same in diameter, standing clear of the floor on a wooden, three-legged stand and safe from the depredations of white ants. Whenever possible, cooking is done outside, but during the rains it is done over a fire of sticks or millet stalks burning in a hollow scooped out in the floor near the wall. A variety of pots clutters the floor space: the large earthenware water pot, an earthenware pot and a shallow iron dish for cooking, small beer pots, a number of drinking bowls made from the tough rinds of gourds neatly halved and dried in the sun. The roofing poles, resting on the mud walls and rising to an apex, form convenient places for tucking away household goods and personal treasures. Such an item one cannot fail to notice is that of several large heads of grain; these are stored for the next season's planting, and no matter how desperate the food situation may become, they will remain untouched, for the next year's supply of food depends on this stock of seed. Behind the poles also may be found a fragment of a mirror, a couple of cigarette tins holding a little oil or a handful of beads, a girl's blue dancing cloth or even the good wife's best Sunday frock, run up for her by the Sisters from some material brought from Kodok, probably some dreadful riot of green and red and yellow, hideous indeed to Western eyes, but to the proud owner more delightful than any Paris creation. Sometimes, to a visitor's distress, a line is slung across the hut on which hang dried fish or strips of meat. The high tone of these delicacies, the myriads of flies they attract and the thick, black smoke of the fire which, having no means of getting away, fills the hut, do not make

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like bellows, and then passes it on. Pipe and beer circulate freely, and under the mellowing influence of both, tongues are quickly loosened and conversation turns to the perennial topic of cattle. After a while, your cigarette finished, you will excuse yourself to your host and, rising from your cramped position, greet everyone present in turn and make your escape into the open air.

The Shilluk, sensible man, starts his day with the sun. He emerges from his hut, however, with heavy head and bloodshot eyes, since he has been sleeping for seven or eight hours in a small windowless hut with the doorway blocked with a heavy grass mat and perhaps a smoky fire burning as a protection against mosquitoes. As a further defence against these pests he covers himself from head to foot with the red ashes from the cow-dung fire, but this does not worry him; if there is water handy he may rinse his hands and face, if not, he will remain as he is until his next visit to the river —perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow or the next day—gives him the chance of taking a bath.

Gradually the village comes to life: the women appear, winding their drab-looking cloths round them, and set off on their daily pilgrimage to the river with the heavy water pots balanced on their heads. The little group breaks up and the women fall into line, one behind the other, as they reach the narrow track leading out of the village, chattering like starlings as they swing along. The boys come out of the byre smothered like their elders in the red ashes in which they have been lying all night, looking like imps from the lower regions. They begin to clean up round the tethered cattle, collecting the cow dung and spreading it out to dry in the sun for fuel. When this is done they milk the cows and goats. From one compound comes the sound of dull thumping as some girl pounds the millet grain into coarse flour. The grain is small and hard, red or white in colour. It is first winnowed by being poured at shoulder height from a basket and then sieved in a boat-shaped scoop of plaited fibre. The grain is then put into a

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narrow circular hole in the ground about a foot deep, and steadily pounded with a heavy, six-foot pole wielded with all the strength a young pair of arms and shoulders can bring to the task. The coarse flour which results from this operation is soaked in water and then ground again, this time between two hard, rough stones. The flour is ready for use; it is mixed with water and boiled in a shallow iron dish to make a thick porridge, and this, flavoured with a little salt if that is available, and mixed with a little milk, constitutes the meal. Young women, however, are denied the luxury of milk, unless they are nursing a baby.

By the time the women have returned from the river, ground the flour and cooked the porridge, it is already nine o'clock. If it is the dry season and there is no work to be done in the fields, the men have been sitting around since sunrise busy perhaps with some task such as making a grass rope or weaving a fish trap, or merely gossiping away the time until their food is ready. When a woman has cooked her husband's breakfast she takes it into the living hut, and then leaves while he eats. She never eats with him, though she may return later, before he has finished, and eat her own meal sitting apart; she may also join other women and eat with them. When breakfast is over the men resume their tasks, and if there is a nice part of the river bank shaded with trees, such as is to be found at Detwok, they will take their rope making and weaving materials or their fishing net and pass the day there pleasantly enough. The young boys untether the bleating sheep and goats which pour out of the village running in search of grass and water, followed by their herds who add to the din by yelling and whistling; the cattle follow at a more leisurely pace in charge of the older boys. Soon the village is empty of animals save for the mangy, half-starved dogs nosing about for scraps of food, and the scraggy chickens picking up grains of millet scattered here and there in the compound. The little girls appear, staggering under the weight of the fat babies they carry on their hips. The women and the older girls go about the never-ending household tasks, cleaning up after their untidy menfolk,

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Photo: Fr. F. Quinodoz

Girl pounding grain as a preliminary to grinding

[facing p. 84]